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Message Text

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15 10
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /070 W
---------- 104288
R 030804Z SEP 75K
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6760
INFO AMEMBASSY LONBN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
FBIS OKINAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 10241

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT - ORIGINAL GARBLED THROUGH-OUT)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 1152:GDS
TAGS: PINT PRV CH
SUBJECT: NEW CAMPAIGN IN CHINA; HIGH LEVEL TARGETS IMPLIED

REF: PEKING 1678

1. INITIAL READING OF LIMITED MATERIALS ON THE RAPIDLY UNFOLDING CAMPAIGN AGAINST A SUNG DYNASTY NOVEL APPEARS TO INDICATE THHAAT CHINA IS EMBARKING ON A MAJOR IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CHALLENGE HIGHLY PLACED OFFICIALS AND THEIR POLICIES. DEFINED AS AN ATTACK AGAINST "CAPITULATIONISM," THE POLICY BEING ATTACKED IS ONE WHICH ADVOCATES ABANDONING REVOLUTION AND SEEKING PERSONAL
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ADVANTAGE.

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2. THE CRITICISM, DIRECTED AT THE HERO OF THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE NOVEL SHUI HU CHUAN (WATER MARGIN OR ALL MEN ARE BROTHERS), IS FOR HIS BETRAYAL OF THE CAUSE OF THE PEASANT UPRISING AND FOR HIS SUBSEQUENT "CAPITULATION" TO THE GOVERNMENT SIDE AFTER ARGUING THAT ONLY LOWER-LEVEL OFFICIALS WERE BAD AND THAT THE EMPEROR AND OTHERS WERE GOOD. THIS HALF-WAY MEASURE ALSO EARNS HIM CONDEMNATION AS A "REVISIONIST." THE DENUNCIATION OF FEUDAL SOCIETY AND ITS OFFICIALS AND THE EXTENSION OF THIS ATTACK TO "UNHORSING THE EMPEROR" ANDCIE ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON THE STATE MACHINERY MAKES THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN POTENTIALLY INFLAMMATORY. IN ADDITION, IT IMPLIES CRITICISM WHICH MANY CHINESE ARE BOUND TO VIEW AS POSSIBLE ATTACKS UPON CHAIRMAN MAO HIMSELF.

3. THE ORIGIN OF THE COMMENTARY AND DEBATE IS NOT KNOWN AND THE CAMPAIGN APPEARS TO HAVE BURST ON THE SCENE FULL BLOWN WITH AN ALMOST COMPLETE SEITCHOVER IN KWANGMING AND PEOPLE'S DAILY MEDIA COVERAGE FROM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/STABILITY AND UNITY THEMES TO ATTACK ON THE NOVEL DURING THE AUGUST 30-31 PERIOD. FOLLOWING ITS INCEPTION IN AN AUGUST 23 KWANGMING DAILY LITERARY COLUMN ARTICLE, THE CAMPAIGN HAS TAKEN ON FOCUS WITH A RED FLAG COMMENTARY AND FIVE ADDITIONAL ARTICLES IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF THIS KEY THEORETICAL JOURNAL (REFTEL). PROVINCIAL BROADCASTS HAVE PICKED UP THE INITIAL CENTER TRANSMISSIONS AND CANTON'S NAN FANG JIH PAO DEVOTED A PAGE OF ITS SEPTEMBER 2 ISSUE TO AN EDITOR'S NOTE AND LOCAL ARTICLES ON THE NOVEL.

4. WHILE THE PARAMETERS OF THE DEBATE REMAIN HAZY AND ONLY A FEW OF THE ARTICLES ARE AVAILABLE HERE, IT IS CLEARLY MORE THAN A LITERARY DEBATE AND ONE WHICH INVOLVES THE POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS IN THE PRC LEADERSHIP. THE NOVEL HAS LONG BEEN A FAVORITE OF CHAIRMAN MAO AND REFERENCES TO ITS PRESENT VALUE AS A "NEGATIVE EXAMPLE" OFFER LITTLE ROOM FOR FAVORABLE COMMENTS ON ITS CONTENT. FURTHER, THE ARGUMENT ON CAPITULATIONISM PARALLELS REFERENCES IN TWO OTHER MAJOR ARTICLES IN AUGUST WHICH ATTACKED THESE POLICIES AS BEING ADVOCATED BY LIN PIAO (SPRCP NO. 5921 AND NO. 5925). WE ALSO NOTE THAT NCNA HAS TAKEN THE UNUSUAL CONFIDENTIAL

STEP OF REPRINTING AN AUGUST RED FLAG ARTICLE BY LIANG HSIAO, ALSO THE AUTHOR OF A CRITIQUE OF SHUI HU CHUAN. THE AUGUST ARTICLE ATTACKS A POLICY OF SURRENDER ADVOCATED BY LIN AND AN ALLEGED LIN PIAO ARGUMENT THAT WEAPONS, NOT MEN, ARE THE DETERMINANTS IN BATTLE. THIS EMPHASIS ON CAPITULATIONISM AND ITS IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION WITH LIN PIAO SUGGESTS THAT THE CURRENT IDEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION MAY INVOLVE MILITARY ISSUES.

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5. THE SCOPE OF RED FLAG AND OTHER COVERAGE DEMONSTRATES THAT DETAILED PLANNING AND EFFORT WENT INTO THE ORCHESTRATING OF THE NEW CAMPAIGN. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT REGIME IDEOLOGUE YAO WEN-YUAN, WHO WAS EARLIER TASKED WITH DRAFTING FOR THE DICTATORSHIP CAMPAIGN, WAS ABSENT FROM PUBLIC VIEW FROM JUNE 28 TO AUGUST 29. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE HAD A HAND IN EDITING AND ARRANGING THE CAMPAIGN MATERIALS. SINCE HIS REAPPEARANCE, HE HAS AGAIN TAKEN UP THE ACTIVE POSTURE HE HAD ASSUMED FOLLOWING HIS MARCH RED FLAG ARTICLE ON THE DICTATORSHIP CAMPAIGN.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE IMPRESSED BY THE FEROCITY AND THE INTENSITY OF THE CRITICISM BEING LEVELLED AT THE NOVEL AND ITS "HERO" AND ARE CONVINCED THAT IF TARGETS ARE INTENDED THEN THEY ARE INDEED HIGH RANKING BVBB. WE ARE NOT CONVINCED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ATTACKS ON THE "EMPEROR" MEAN THAT THE CHAIRMAN IS UNDER ATTACK AND FIND THE USE OF MAO QUOTATIONS IN THE VARIOUS ARTICLES A PROBABLE SIGN THAT HE IS NOT A TARGET. WE ARE LOATH TO ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY A SPECIFIC TARGET NOW SO EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN, PARTICULARLY SINCE WE HAVE NOT YET HAD ACCESS TO THE RED FLAG MATERIALS. WE ALSO WOULD NOTE THAT LOCAL PRC OFFICIALS HAVE DOWNPLAYED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS CAMPAIGN--ALTHOUGH THEY MAY NOT YET HAVE RECEIVED CENTER INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO HANDLE IT. FINALLY, THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR IS NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE DICTATORSHIP CAMPAIGN AND COULD BE DEFUSED BY MAKING IT FIT INTO EARLIER GUIDE-LINES CALLING FOR DISCIPLINE, UNITY AND STABILITY.
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